

CONNOR

Mackenzie H.

Grade 8

Stanton Middle School

In most families the older children set a good example for the younger siblings, well in my family that's not the situation, in fact it is the complete opposite. Everyday my eleven-year-old brother Connor teaches me something valuable without even realizing it. Connor is special; he has a condition called autism that makes some things harder for him than they are for most people. Even though he has this condition, he never lets it hold him back. Just by being who he is, he has not only taught me some of my laws of life but also how to live by these laws. For that I am truly grateful.

The first law of life he has taught me is kindness. I think from knowing Connor my heart has grown three sizes bigger than a normal heart. He knows how to love with his entire heart and not just with his eyes or his mind. Everyday he gives his friends and family his steadfast love without even thinking about it. I don't understand how one person can always put everyone else before himself even when he is having a bad day. He has a hard time reading feelings-but he is always concerned if other people are happy or sad and he will do anything to make them happy! Each day I try to get better at doing this amazing task and everyday I get a little closer but I don't believe I will ever be able to do what he does. I'm lucky to experience this huge heart in the shape of a skinny, little eleven year old boy.

Tolerance is a skill you really have to learn first hand. I'm lucky I have Connor to teach it to me. I see people make fun of other people who act different or talk different and I know how wrong that is because I get to experience first hand, everyday, how difficult life can be when you or someone you love has a disability. It's hard when I hear or see people make fun of my little brother for how he acts. He can't help the way he was born and he tries so hard to please people-I wish they knew this. It is easier for me to take a walk in someone else's shoes and see what they are going through because of Connor. This skill helps in pretty much every aspect of my life. It helps me be supportive of my friends when they're going through a rough time in their life, it helps me solve problems and look at situations differently, and to be more accepting and kind to those who are different. Tolerance is really important to me and I'm glad Connor is here to teach it to me.

Another law of life Connor has taught me is perseverance. Even though Connor has more barriers to overcome than most people he never gives up. When I see him trying to do a math problem or something like that I feel as though if he can do it so can I. Sometimes when I give up on a problem, he'll come over to me and ask if he can help. Of course it would be funny watching a 5th grader doing an 8th grader's work just by showing that he cares and giving me the extra little push, I always try again. You would think that the more barriers someone has the more they would want to give up, but Connor has definitely proved that wrong! I've seen some people with fewer troubles give up so quickly and I wish they had Connor to help them learn how to keep on trying. Connor is my own little superhero; he goes up, up, and away, soaring to new heights by not ever giving up!

Connor works hard everyday and by doing so he teaches me my laws of life. He teaches me kindness, tolerance, and perseverance. I believe he will continue blessing those around him by letting them know that everything is going to be okay in his own special way. I hope that one day they will find a cure for autism but for right now I love Connor just the way he is. I hope he will continue to teach me the things in life that need to be taught. There are so many things in that head of his waiting to come out and I hope to be there when they do. Life has it's ups and downs but no matter what happens he will always be the one who has taught me the most about life.